

783 We were told never to forget these women, and we make these gifts to them so that they will say a kind word for us.' Their oath is made by the moon or sun. After death they believe they go to the east, and claim that a man killed in battle is better treated, better liked, in the hereafter than one who dies of disease. They cling tenaciously to their old beliefs, customs and habits, and though they have adopted some of the manners of the Sioux and their own allies, the Arickarees and Gros Ventres, they are bitterly opposed to the ways of the whites.

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197 **Language Different from Sioux.** In speaking of their language Mr. Mitchell says: 'I always contended that Mr. Gallatin was in error in supposing the Mandans and Sioux descended from the same stock. Mr. Kipp, who has been well acquainted with both tribes for upward of thirty years, and speaks both languages with great fluency and correctness, fully concurs with me in opinion. There are a few words that are somewhat similar in sound, but this Mr. Kipp accounts for by the fact of the Sioux and Mandans having been neighbors from time immemorable, and during intervals of peace visiting and intermarrying with each other.' Many of them now speak the Sioux language, and though I consider their vocal language as distinct and different from all others, still high authorities at present class it with the Sioux; that is, being with the same stock." (P. 242.)

From the "Collections of the American Antiquarian Society," Vol. II (Cambridge, 1836), we quote the following concerning the Mandans, in which they are spoken of as one of three tribes of the Minnetarees. What is said therein concerning the chief Big White and the Welsh theory will receive consideration later on.

"The Minetares (Minetaree and Minetaries) consist of three tribes, speaking three different languages which belong to a common stock. Its affinities with the Dahcofa are but remote, but have appeared sufficient to entitle them to be considered as of the same family.

105 "Two of those tribes, the Mandans, whose numbers do not exceed fifteen hundred, and the stationary Minetaries, amounting to three thousand souls, including those called Annahwas, cultivate the soil and live in villages situated on or near the Missouri, between the forty-seventh and forty-eighth degrees of north latitude. They are kept in a state of perpetual alarm by the Assiniboines, the Tetons, the Rapid Indians and other erratic

648 lower village brought down four of the Sharhas. We explained to them our intentions, and advised them to remain at peace with each other; we also gave them a flag, some tobacco, and a speech for their nation. These were accompanied by a letter to Messrs. Tabeau and Gravelines at the Ricara village, requesting them to preserve peace if possible, and to declare the part which we should be forced to take if the Ricaras and Sioux made war on those whom we had adopted. After distributing a few presents to the Sharhas and Mandans, and showing them our curiosities, we dismissed them, apparently well pleased at their reception." (id 187.)

776 Mandan Religion—Origin. "Tuesday, 4th. Oscapsaee and
782 two young chiefs passed the day with us. The whole religion of the Mandans consists in the belief of one great spirit presiding over their destinies. This being must be in the nature of a good genius, since it is associated with the healing art, and the great spirit is synonymous with the great medicine, a name also applied to every thing which they do not understand. Each individual selects for himself the particular object of his devotion, which is termed his medicine, and is either some invisible being or more commonly some animal, which henceforward becomes his protector or his intercessor with the great spirit; to propitiate whom every attention is lavished, and every personal consideration is sacrificed. 'I was lately owner of seventeen horses,' said a Mandan to us one day, 'but I have offered them all up to my medicine, and am now poor.' He had in reality taken all his wealth, his horses, into the plain, and turning them loose, committed them to the care of his medicine, and abandoned them forever. The horses, less religious, took care of themselves, and the pious votary traveled home on foot. Their belief in a future state is connected with this tradition of their origin; the whole nation resided in one large village under ground, near a subterranean lake; a grape vine extended its roots down to their habitation, and gave them a view of the light; some of the most adventurous climbed up the vine, and were delighted with the sight of the earth, which they found covered with buffalo and rich with every kind of fruits; returning with the grapes they had gathered, their countrymen were so pleased with the taste of them that the whole nation resolved to leave their dull residence for the charms

of the upper region; men, women and children ascended by means of the vine; but when about half the nation had reached the surface of the earth, a corpulent woman, who was clambering up the vine, broke it with her weight, and closed upon herself and the rest of the nation the light of the sun. Those who were left on earth made a village below, where we saw the nine villages; and when the Mandans die they expect to return to the original seats of their forefathers; the good reaching the ancient village by means of the lake, which the burdens of the sins of the wicked will not enable them to cross." (id 191.) 775 773

Buffalo Chase. "Friday, December 7th. The wind still continued from the northwest, and the day is very cold. Shahaka, the chief of the lower village, came to apprise us that the buffalo were near, and that his people were waiting for us to join them in the chase. Captain Clarke with fifteen men went out and found the Indians engaged in killing the buffalo, the hunters mounted on horseback and armed with bows and arrows encircled the herd, and gradually drive them into a plain or an open place fit for the movements of horse; they then ride in among them, and singling out a buffalo, a female being preferred, go as close as possible and wound her with arrows till they think they have given the mortal stroke; then they pursue another till the quiver is exhausted. If, which rarely happens, the wounded buffalo attacks the hunter, he evades his blow by the agility of his horse, which is trained for the combat with great dexterity. When they have killed the requisite number they collect their game, and the squaws and attendants come up from the rear and skin and dress the animals. Captain Clarke killed ten buffalo, of which only five were brought to the fort, the rest, which could not be conveyed home, being seized by the Indians, among whom the custom is, that whenever a buffalo is found dead without an arrow, or any particular mark, he is the property of the finder; so that often a hunter secures scarcely any of the game he kills, if the arrow happens to fall off; whatever is left out at night falls to the share of the wolves, who are the constant and numerous attendants of the buffalo." (id 193.) 224

Mandan Games. "Wednesday, 19th. The weather moderated, and the river rose a little, so that we were unable to continue the picketing of the fort. Notwithstanding the extreme cold, we 524

766 name were taken to the usual place, where they were placed on a scaffold or interred, according to the parents' preference.

775 The Mandan believed that there was a Baby Hill near Fort Clark, another near the Heart River, and a third near Dickinson which had interiors like an earth lodge, in which an old man cared for them. If a child died before being named, it returned to the Baby Hill. People claimed to have seen baby tracks on the tops and sides of these hills. It was believed that the spirits in the hill near the Heart River came north when the Mandan came north. If a woman had been married a number of years and was childless, desiring a child, she would go to one of these hills to pray for one. Those wanting a daughter brought girl's clothing and a ball; for a son she brought a small bow and arrow. The Mandan believed in rebirth. Calf Woman's grandfather said he was one who had been reborn. One of her grandchildren had a spot on her hip, and it was thought she was one who had lived before. It was believed that children choose the mother they want and that a child resembling a sibling who had died was the reincarnation of the other child. The Mandan cite numerous instances of culture heroes who selected a mother when desiring to be born into the tribe.

553 A girl usually keeps her first name as long as she lives. If she was sick or unlucky, her parents frequently put up a feast to get a new name for her. If she had grown up, her brothers and sisters helped her prepare a renaming feast.

853 A nursing child frequently developed a sore mouth which interfered with its feeding. In such cases, the parents selected a man of the child's father's clan to cure it by piercing the skin of the ceremonial father's leg and permitting the child to suck of his blood. A payment was made to the man selected by the child's clan brothers and sisters.

TRAINING

861 The child's training was both economic and ritualistic and differed according to the sex of the child. A girl was trained in lodge management, household arts, gardening, curing of meat, 868 and certain ritualistic practices, receiving her instruction primarily from the women of the lodge. A boy was taught hunting 562 and fishing and went out while still a boy to help bring meat

774 it was a member during the life of the individual. It was the earth spirit and was believed to hover around the lodge so long as any visible evidence of the lodge ruins remained. People would see dim lights around the abandoned villages and attributed these lights to the third spirit. The fourth spirit was black and remained outside the lodge and traveled away from the village at times but would return frequently. It was represented by a shadow and was the spirit that frightened people. It was this spirit that Calf Woman believed frightened her the evening before government rations were issued so that she was unable to walk out for her share. It was also the spirit that came [787] to a person in his dreams. When moccasins were burned at the doorway of the lodge where a person had died, it no longer frightened people.

• 715 The Mandan concept of the hereafter was based largely on vision experiences. They have a number of accounts of persons who "died" and then returned. All informants were in agreement that the first two spirits returned downstream. Some of the very old people who were remembered by my informants claimed that they would go to the Heart River, where their old people had lived and died. At that place there was a spirit village for each of the villages of the Heart River area, and a spirit-house stood over the body of each person either buried or placed on the prairie there. Some claimed that they would return to Baby Hill and be reincarnated into the tribe. At the present time the older Mandan think that they will return to Like-a-Fishhook Village, where they will be reunited with their relatives who lived and died there. They believe that the spirit people live in earth-lodge villages, plant gardens, hunt, and perform ceremonies much the same as during their lifetime. One's status in the hereafter is essentially the same as when one died.

715 Children who died before being named were wrapped in robes
766 and placed in trees or interred apart from the rest of the dead.
There were no rites, since they were not considered a part of the village until they had been named. They were believed to return immediately to the Home of the Babies to be reborn later.

000 When a person believed he was about to die, the relatives

768 smallpox epidemic of 1837. The orphans were taken in by the
602 females according to clan affiliation and reared as their own
614 children.

762 Suicide was rare among the Mandan. The only instances
975 remembered by Mandan informants were immediately following the last smallpox epidemic. When a household had been nearly exterminated, the remaining females frequently took their lives. Crows Heart thought that suicides were buried and that their spirits did not reach the spirit world. Scattercorn remembered hearing of two girls who hanged themselves in 1837 in the village where her father lived and said that they were placed on the scaffold which was built by her father whose sister sent the spirits away at the end of four days.

682 The last murder of a male occurred among the Mandan in
627 1820, part of the Mandan separating from the village group to live on Eagle Nose Butte until 1823, when the relatives of the murdered man invited them to return to Fort Clark Village. One who had been murdered was treated as though he had been killed in battle or had died a natural death. There was the usual preparation of the body by the relatives of the father's clan. The murderer, if caught, was killed by the murdered man's male siblings or clansmen, and his body was buried at a distance
[766] from the village. No rites were performed to send his spirit away. The murder of a woman by another woman was treated lightly and settled by a payment of goods.

765 The Mandan, and in later years the Hidatsa also, were accustomed to collect the bones of their relatives after the scaffolds
614 on which they were placed had rotted and fallen to the ground.
178 The skulls were taken to a place adjacent to the scaffolds and there arranged in circles of which there were a number near each village. Scattercorn claimed that the skulls of each circle were of closely related people who had belonged to the same clan and that these shrines enhanced the "sacred powers" of the Woman Above bundles which were a part of the shrine.⁴ If these were clan shrines, the practice of arranging the circles according to clans must have been abandoned after moving to Like-a-Fishhook Village, as there were only two or three circles at most, and the Hidatsa made simultaneous use of these shrines

4. See Catlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-52, for an eyewitness description of these circles.

who lives on the planet Venus and protects men. Fifth was one called the Lying Prairie Wolf, a sort of wandering Jew and evil spirit, but without power. Lastly was Ochkih-Hedde; he came once to the village and taught them many things, then disappeared. When anyone saw him in a dream it was a sign of death. Sacrifices were offered to him and images of him were exposed in the village. 776

The sun was worshipped as the place where the Lord of Life lived. In the moon lived the Old Woman Who Never Dies, who had a white line around her head. She corresponded to the Corn Mother of the Arikara and was supposed to be very powerful. Many sacrifices were offered to her. She had six children, three sons and three daughters. The first son was day (the first of creation), the second was the sun, the third was night. The eldest daughter was the morning star (the woman who carries a bunch of feathers), the second was the striped pumpkin (a star revolving about the polar star), the third was the evening star. Besides these there was a group of supernatural beings of less prominence, among whom were the first chief, certain animal people, the thunder-bird and similar beings. 772

They seemed to have two distinct theories as to the hereafter, according to Maximilian part of the people adhered to each view. Both beliefs agreed that each man had four souls, one black, one brown, one clear, and the other not described. The first sect believed that the clear soul returned to the Lord of Life; another one went to the villages to the south which are often visited by the gods, and one of the souls of the brave and great men went to the villages of the gods. There was a separate village for the wicked. Life in all these villages was a continuance of that on earth, they had food, women, went hunting and on war parties, and had an abundance of everything. To this might be added Catlin's story,¹ somewhat less credible, that they believed in a warm heaven and a cold hell; that all went to hell for a while where the Good Spirit punished them, after which they went to heaven where they were again tempted by the Evil Spirit. The other sect described by Maximilian believed that after death they went to live in the sun or stars.² 775

¹ Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 187.

² Op. cit., p. 480.

775 In this description of an after life, there was a marked mixture of ideas. The idea of multiple souls is Siouan, the rest is more or less common over most of the region.

776 As usual in the plains area every natural phenomenon and
821 unaccountable event was mystery or medicine, and the medicine idea played the usual important part in all their religious customs. Thunder was ascribed to the familiar thunder-bird, the glitter of whose eyes dug a path through the clouds for the rain and caused the lightning.¹ Solitary claps of thunder were ascribed to a huge turtle which lived in the clouds. The rainbow was said to be a spirit which accompanies the sun and which shows itself when the sun retires for the night. The aurora borealis was said to be the fire kindled at an assembly of the great medicine men and warriors of the northern nations, over which they cooked their dead enemies in huge pots.² They had several beliefs about the stars—that of the Sioux, that each star is a man, and when a child is born the star comes down and when he dies it returns; also that a multitude of supernatural beings existed in the stars to which sacrifices and prayers were offered. Dreams were of very great importance and governed nearly all their acts.

[787] There were many small personal superstitions or mysteries.
789 One man told Maximilian that he could turn a snowball into a
843 white stone, another claimed that his nose always bled if he picked up his pipe by the bowl. There were many signs of good and bad luck. A pregnant woman was considered to bring luck at the game of Skohpe. The medicine men told them that if a clay image of an enemy were made with a needle or quill in it for a heart, and were placed at the foot of some medicine structure, that enemy would die. A pregnant woman brings bad luck to her husband in hunting. Many of the Mandans believed that they had some animal, as a buffalo, turtle or frog in them; the women had a dance when they thought an ear of corn was in them, which the dance caused to come out.³ There were a number of other superstitions of this sort, mostly common to all the plains tribes. One more notable might be mentioned, however, that of building the fire with two sticks crossed in the center,

¹ Ibid., p. 422.² Ibid., p. 423.³ Ibid., p. 423.

forbidden him to kill the prairie larks, yet he shot all his arrows at these birds, but he was unable to kill any. Upon this, one of the birds said to him, "Why will you kill me, since I am related to you?" He dug up in the moon the pomme blanche (*Prosoales esculenta*), for which his mother reproved him, because, through the hole which he had dug, they could see the Manitari villages in the earth beneath. And his mother said, "See, all those men are our relations; I did not intend to descend to the earth yet, but now we must go thither." The father once ordered the son to shoot a buffalo for him, and to bring him all the sinews of the animal; but the son twisted a rope with part of those sinews, in order thereby to let himself down to the earth. Accordingly he descended to the earth in the vicinity of the Little Missouri, but his rope reached only to the top of the trees. If he had had all the sinews of the buffalo, his rope would have reached the ground, but now remained suspended, and swung backwards and forwards. A large stone was thrown at him from the moon, which stone was in existence not very long since. The stone, however, could not kill him, he being medicine, that is, charmed. 539

The Mandans believe that the thunder is produced by the motion of the wings of a gigantic bird. When this bird flies softly, as is usually the case, he is not heard, but when he flaps his wings violently, he occasions a roaring noise. This huge bird is said to have only two toes on each foot, one behind and the other before. It lives in the mountains, where it builds an immense nest, as big as Fort Clarke. Its food consists of deer and other large animals, the horns of which are heaped up round the nest. The glance of its eyes produces lightning; it breaks through the clouds, the canopy of heaven, and makes a way for the rain. The isolated and peculiarly loud claps of thunder are produced by a gigantic tortoise, which lives in the clouds. When the lightning strikes, it is a sign of anger. They believe the stars to be deceased men. When a child is born, a star descends and appears on the earth in human form; after death it reascends and appears again as a star in the heavens. 821

The rainbow is a spirit accompanying the sun, and is especially visible at its setting. Many affirm that the northern lights are occasioned by a large assembly of the medicine men and distinguished warriors of several nations in the north, who boil their prisoners and slain enemies in immense cauldrons. The Chippeways are said to call this phenomenon "the dancing spirit," and the milky way, "the path of the ghosts." [775]

Dipauch related a history of the creation and the origin of the Mandan tribe, in the following manner. Though this narrative is equally silly and tiresome, I subjoin it, as giving an idea of the intellectual condition of this people, and the nature of their conversations. 773 539

Before the existence of the earth, the lord of life created the first man, Numank-Machana, who moved on the waters, and met with a diver or duck, which was alternately diving and rising again. The man said to the bird, "You dive so well, now dive deep and bring up some earth."

757 When blindness arises from the dazzling brightness of the snow, which it very frequently does in March, they bathe the eyes with a solution of gunpowder in water. They often have recourse to bleeding, which they perform with a sharp flint, or a knife. They often apply to the Whites for medicine, and willingly follow their prescriptions. These Indians have also various remedies for their horses; thus, when a horse has the strangury, they give it a piece of a wasp's nest.

764 When a Mandan or Manitari dies, they do not let the corpse remain long in the village; but convey it to the distance of 200 paces, and lay it on a narrow stage, about six feet long, resting on four stakes about ten feet high, the body being first laced up in buffalo robes and a blanket. The face, painted red, is turned towards the east. A number of such stages are seen about their villages, and, although they themselves say that this custom is injurious to the health of the villages, they do not renounce it. On many of these stages there are small boxes, containing the bodies of children wrapped in cloth or skins. Ravens are usually seen sitting on these stages, and the Indians dislike that bird, because it feeds on the flesh of their relations. If you ask a Mandan why they do not deposit their dead in the ground, he answers—"The lord of life has, indeed, told us that we came from the ground, and should return to it again;" yet we have lately begun to lay the bodies of the dead on stages, because we love them, and would weep at the sight of them. They believe that every person has several spirits dwelling in him; one of these spirits is black, another brown, and another light-coloured, the latter of which alone returns to the lord of life. They think that after death they go to the south, to several villages which are often visited by the gods; that the brave and most eminent go to the village of the good, but the wicked into a different one; that they there live in the same manner as they do here, carry on the same occupations, eat the same food, have wives, and enjoy the pleasures of the chase and war. Those who are kind-hearted are supposed to make many presents and do good, find everything in abundance, and their existence there is dependant on their course of life while in the world. Some of the inhabitants of the Mandan villages are said not to believe all these particulars, and suppose that after death they will live in the sun or in a certain star.

765
[304] They mourn for the dead a whole year; cut off their hair, cover their body and head with white or grey clay, and often, with a knife or sharp flint, make incisions in their arms and legs in parallel lines, in their whole length, so that they are covered with blood. For some days after death the relations make a loud lament and bewailing. Often a relative, or some other friend, covers the dead, as they express it: he brings one or two woollen cloths, of a red, blue, white, or green colour, and, as soon as the body is laid on the stage, mounts upon the scaffolding, and conceals the body beneath the covering. A friend who will do this is, in token of respect, presented, by the family of the deceased, with a horse. If it is known beforehand that a person intends doing this honour to the dead, a horse is at once tied near the stage, and the friend, having per-